



County of San Diego

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Date

Dear San Diego County Property Owner,

Wildfire season is again rapidly approaching, though we also know that a wildfire can happen any time of year in San Diego County! **Prevention is everyone's responsibility, and it is the key to protecting lives and property in the community and region.** Vegetation that was removed last year may have grown back and will continue to require maintenance. The San Diego County Fire Authority and CAL-FIRE are reminding property owners with this courtesy notice of local Defensible Space requirements. Please take a moment to review the enclosed material and refer to the schedule below to plan when to treat your property.

Vegetation Type/Condition	Approximate Treatment Time
Green Annual Weeds or Grass	When the annual weeds and grass begin to dry, usually beginning about April 1 to May 15.
Dry Annual Weeds or Grass over 6 inches in height	Immediately
Native Brush	As soon as possible. Best if done in the fall to early spring to avoid nesting birds.
Dead or Neglected Ornamental Plants/Landscaping	As soon as possible

In order to allow neighboring property owners to meet their own Defensible Space requirements, all vacant and occupied parcel(s) that are adjacent to occupied parcels are required by law to manage the vegetation within those areas of their parcel that are within 100 feet of a neighboring structure. If a fire originates from your property and spreads to surrounding vegetation you may be held legally liable for damage to neighboring properties.

THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL NOTICE TO ABATE HAZARDS. This is a courtesy letter to inform and educate property owners within San Diego County of the requirements for vegetation management. In the next few months, your local fire agency may be inspecting properties for possible fire hazards, vegetation management and hazard removal compliance.



Equipment Use Safety



Are **You** doing the right thing, the wrong way?

Are you doing the right thing the wrong way -for example, trying to eliminate the fire hazards around your home and in the process starting a wildland fire? Each year CAL FIRE responds to more than 1,600 fires started by Californians using equipment the wrong way.

Whether working to create a defensible space around your home, just mowing the lawn, or pulling your dirt bike over to the side of the road, if you live in a wildland area you need to use all equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire. Do your part, the right way, to keep your community fire safe.

Here' s how to do it the **Right Way**:

- Do all yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10 a.m. **Not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!**
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. **Never** use lawn mowers in dry vegetation.
- Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.
- Remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors, harvesters, chain saws, weed eaters, mowers, motorcycles, and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust, and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- In wildland areas, a permit may be required for grinding and welding operations, and spark shields may be required on equipment. Be sure to have 10 feet of clearance, a 46"round point shovel, and a back pump water-type fire extinguisher ready to use.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late! **Don't pull off into dry grass or brush.** Keep a cell phone nearby and call 911 **immediately** in case of a fire.

www.fire.ca.gov

www.sdcountyfire.org



Equipment Use



WHEN YOU CALL US, WILL WE FIT?



THROUGH YOUR GATES?

UNDER YOUR TREES?



**IS THERE ENOUGH ROOM
FOR US TO TURNAROUND?**

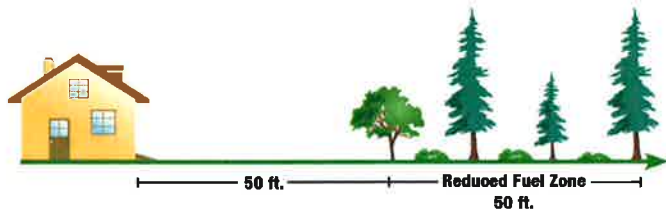
<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/sdcfa/>

(For turnaround requirements, see our website under; 'Prevention'/'Development Services'/'Forms & Information')

100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE

MAKE YOUR HOME FIRE SAFE

A Defensible Space of 100 feet around your home is required by law. It protects your home while providing a safe area for firefighters.



50/50 Reduced Fuel Zone applies to residents within the unincorporated areas of San Diego County

1 "Lean, Clean and Green Zone"

Lawn, weeds and other landscaping in the first 50 feet around your home should be mowed and properly maintained.

Thinning and pruning the brush and trees in the first 50 feet around your home is critical.

Clean all needles and leaves from your roof and gutters.

Trim tree limbs at least 10 feet from chimneys, and remove dead branches hanging over your home or garage.

The law requires a screen over your chimney outlet of not more than 1/2 inch mesh.

2 "Reduced Fuel Zone"

Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants to improve your chance of stopping a wildfire before it destroys your home.

Remove lower tree limbs to reduce the risk of a vertical fire ladder.

"Additional Tips"

Use care when operating equipment such as lawnmowers. One small spark may start a fire; a string trimmer is much safer.

Check with your local fire department for additional requirements.



www.sdcountyfire.org
www.firesafesdcounty.org

Contact your local CAL FIRE office, fire department, or Fire Safe Council for tips and assistance. www.fire.ca.gov

100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE

To reduce the danger to life and property from destructive brush fires, residents are asked to:

- ☐ Maintain effective Defensible Space by removing, modifying, or thinning highly ignitable shrubs, trees or plants and other flammable materials from areas within 100 horizontal feet of structures.
- ☐ In the unincorporated area, the 100 foot fuel modification zone is divided into two zones as follows:



- ① Zone one:** Area within a 50 foot radius of **any** structure. Must be modified/treated and planted with fire resistive plants.
- ② Zone two:** Area between 50 to 100 feet from the structure. Native vegetation may remain, but it must be thinned by 50% when the parcel is compared to the natural wildland setting adjacent to it. All dead and dying vegetation must be removed. Grass and other vegetation less than 18" in height above the ground need not be removed when necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.

- ☐ Remove all dead wood from trees adjacent to or overhanging a building. Remove limbs from bottom 1/3 of tree, up to a maximum of 6 feet above the ground, and all limbs within 10 foot radius of the chimney stack opening; remove debris from under trees.
- ☐ Remove leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth from all roofs and gutters.
- ☐ Stack firewood 30 feet away from structures.
- ☐ Remove garbage, refuse, rubbish, trash, cuttings, fallen limbs, trimmings, or other easily ignitable waste material from property.
- ☐ Remove all combustible vegetation within 10 feet along both sides of roadways and driveways.
- ☐ Maintain a 13 foot 6 inch vertical clearance over all roads and driveways for emergency vehicles.
- ☐ Remove all items that would easily ignite such as trash or shrubs and trees within 10 feet of propane tanks.
- ☐ Display address at a location plainly visible to emergency vehicles on the street or roadway fronting your property.

These are the minimum requirements. Your particular parcel may have additional requirements based on topography and native plant conditions. In addition, you may consider locating patio furniture away from structures, to avoid an ignition source.

For more information visit: www.sdcountyfire.org AND www.firesafesdcounty.org



"This document was prepared under a grant from FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security."

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